

Veterans Benefit Specialist (VBS) REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications due ***Friday, August 9, 2013*** prior to 4:00 pm

Lewis County is seeking a qualified individual to provide assistance for eligible Lewis County veterans and their dependents using the Veterans Relief Fund (VRF).

Part I

Background:

The Lewis County **Veterans Relief Fund** provides emergency relief and other services to the County's indigent veterans. This fund is established under RCW 73.08 (Revised Code of Washington).

The **Veterans Advisory Board** (VAB) is made up of members from nationally recognized veteran's organizations in Lewis County and veterans from the community at large. The VAB functions as an advisory board to the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) providing policy and procedural guidance for the administration of the VRF.

Objective:

The principal function of this position is to assist indigent veterans and/or their dependents in obtaining information, determining eligibility, and applying for services and benefits to which they are qualified. Qualifications of each veteran will be determined by the Veterans Benefit Specialist through review of discharge papers, proof of income, personal interview, and any other requirements as described in the RCWs, WACs, or policy and procedures. The Veterans Relief Fund is an emergency fund and shall be used to help qualified veterans during an emergency situation as determined by meeting specified eligibility requirements.

Scope of Work:

See Scope of Work – ***Attachment A***

The purpose of this Request for Qualifications is to select an individual who will provide services through the Veterans Relief Fund to veterans whose income is at or below 150% of the national poverty level. Services may include the following but are not limited to:

- Medical
- Housing
- Utilities
- Training
- Burial benefits
- Veterans Emergency Relief Funds

Time Frame:

The following dates are the intended timeline:

Advertise in local papers	July 31, August 1, 2013
Qualifications due	August 9, 2013 by 4:00 pm
Interviews	August 12-15
Selection Committee recommendation	August 15, 2013
BOCC Resolution	August 26, 2013
Anticipated Selected Applicant's first day	September 9, 2013

Note: Lewis County reserves the right to modify the schedule as circumstances may warrant.

Project Funding:

The County will provide sufficient funding for the operation of the program. The funding is through the Lewis County Veterans Relief Fund, and the funding source is specific tax collected from real property tax as mandated by RCW 73.08.080.

Place of Performance:

The office space may be located at the Lewis County Public Health & Social Services Building, 360 NW North Street, Chehalis, WA. The successful contracted provider will negotiate the number of hours they will be available to meet with veterans as part of the scope of work.

Period of Performance:

A Service Provider contract awarded as a result of this RFQ will be from the date of a signed contract through December 31, 2014. The contract may be available for renewal for two year periods following the initial expiration date. Lewis County reserves the right to renew the contract from this RFP with the same terms and conditions.

Compensation:

This position will be contracted with Lewis County and compensated at \$1,760.00 per month for a minimum of 80 hours' work per month plus mileage. Mileage reimbursement will be determined by the most current Lewis County Resolution. Qualifying mileage will include traveling from the Public Health & Social Services building to established outreach locations (currently in Morton and Winlock) and approved/required trainings.

Part II:

Qualification Format and Requirements:

Sealed Qualifications must be received in the following format with the described items in order to be considered:

Format: All items submitted in the Qualification must be typed in 12 font on 8.5" x 11" white paper.

Cover Sheet: See Cover Sheet – **Attachment B**. This must be completed and submitted with your Letter of Interest **and** Resume.

Letter of Interest: Introduce yourself and demonstrate your understanding of the nature of the position.

Resume: Include a resume listing your qualifications and experience including the following requirements:

- Be a US Veteran with an Honorable Discharge
- Possess a high school diploma or GED equivalent
- Possess a valid State driver's license
- Have own means of reliable transportation
- Maintain proof of vehicle insurance
- Must be a Certified Veteran's Service Officer or complete the training program conducted by Veterans Affairs within one year to obtain such certification
- Broad working knowledge of services available in and around Lewis County
- Demonstrate knowledge and advocacy of veteran issues
- Proficient in Word, Excel, and Outlook programs and be familiar with entering data in database programs

Copy of DD214: You must include a copy of your DD214 as proof of Honorable Discharge.

Submittal Address:

Lewis County Public Health & Social Services
Attn: Sandi Andrus
360 NW North Street
Chehalis, WA 98532

For e-mail submission: Sandra.Andrus@lewiscountywa.gov

Qualifications are due in the office no later than **Friday, August 9, 2013**, 4:00 pm. Qualifications must be submitted by mail, e-mail, or hand delivered; those submitted by any other means will not be accepted. Qualifications submitted after the deadline date and time will not be accepted.

Communications with Lewis County:

Any questions regarding the submittal process and/or aspects of the Request for Qualifications may be made via e-mail to Sandi Andrus at Sandra.Andrus@lewiscountywa.gov or by phone at 360-740-1148.

Evaluation Process:

A review panel will review Qualifications and recommend finalists for interviews. A review team will interview finalists.

Lewis County reaffirms its right to make any selection it deems prudent and such selection is not subject to protest or appeal. The successful individual will perform duties as agreed upon in the final negotiated Scope of Work.

VETERANS BENEFIT SPECIALIST

Scope of Work – Attachment A

NATURE OF WORK:

Assist veterans and their dependents in obtaining information, determining eligibility, and applying for Veterans Relief Fund services and benefits if they are qualified.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Interviews veterans, dependents, and beneficiaries on rights, privileges, and benefits provided under the existing laws.

Provides information, advice, and guidance to veterans and their dependents concerning medical, housing, utilities, training, and burial benefits and any other veteran-related benefit to which they may be qualified.

Explains and advises laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to veteran-related benefits.

Refers clients to appropriate community services, and/or local, state, or federal agencies for veteran-related benefits.

Advises veterans and their surviving dependents in obtaining and presenting evidence to establish eligibility for veteran's benefits.

Maintains records and prepares periodic and special reports.

Provides aid to veterans in Eastern and Southern Lewis County by conducting outreach appointments on a monthly basis.

Occasionally conducts group orientation to explain rights, privileges, and eligibility under both Federal and State laws.

May provide a qualified veteran or dependent with emergency aid if there are no available programs or assistance from other qualified veterans' resources.

Attends meetings and provides monthly reports to the Lewis County Veterans Advisory Board.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS:

Must possess a High School diploma or GED equivalent and be eligible to work in the United States. Must possess a valid driver's license and have own means of reliable transportation for business purposes with proof of vehicle insurance. A successful passing of criminal background check will be required.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES REQUIRED:

Knowledge of:

- Benefits, services, and programs available to veterans, surviving spouses, and dependents.
- Applicable laws, rules and regulations, Revised Code of Washington (RCW), and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) pertaining to veterans' benefits including but not limited to:
 - RCW 10.101.010 Definitions
 - RCW 41.04.005 "Veteran" defined for certain purposes
 - RCW 41.04.007 "Veteran" defined for certain purposes
 - RCW 43.180.250 Veteran homeownership down payment assistance Program – Rules
 - RCW 72.36 Soldiers' and veterans' homes and veterans' cemetery
 - RCW 73.08.005 Definitions
 - RCW 73.08.010 County veterans' assistance programs for indigent veterans and families – Requirements
 - RCW 73.08.035 Veterans' advisory boards
 - RCW 73.08.070 County burial of indigent deceased veterans
 - RCW 73.08.080 Tax levy authorized
 - WAC 296-150M-0322 Data requirements for the identification of indigent persons
 - WAC 388-450-0015 What types of income does the department not use to figure out my benefits?
 - WAC 484-20-040 Eligibility – Indigency
- State, federal, and community organizations available to provide services to veterans and their dependents.
- Office administrative principles and practices, including filing, record keeping, and the operation of standard office equipment.
- Business arithmetic, including percentages, decimals, fractions, and proportions.
- Customer service and public relations methods and practices.

Skills in:

- Reading, understanding, interpreting, and applying relevant County, State, and Federal statutes, codes, rules, and regulations.
- Maintaining accurate files and records, and preparing reports.
- Operating a personal computer using standard and specialized software.
- Exercising sound independent judgment within established guidelines.
- Effective verbal and written communication including interpreting, explaining and applying complex rules and policies to a variety of people, backgrounds, and cultures including distraught claimants.

Request for Qualifications Veterans Benefit Specialist

Attachment B - Cover Sheet

Name: _____

Address: _____ County: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

*Are you an honorably discharged veteran of the United States Armed Forces?

☐ Yes (*if yes, please attach copy of your DD214*) ☐ No (*if no, you are not qualified for this position*)

*Are you available to work a minimum of 80 hours per month during normal work hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

*Are you familiar with RCW 73.08 and other Codes regarding Veterans?

☐ Yes ☐ No

I am including the following items in my Qualifications packet: Letter of Interest, Resume outlining my required qualifications, and my DD214.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this Qualification is accurate and complete.

Signature

Date

Office Use Only

Received: _____

By: _____

Score: _____ Recommendation: _____